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School Committee Minutes 09-24-2002

ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2002
7:30 PM

Present: David W. McKenna, Chair Joani LaMachia
Suzanne Owayda, Vice Chair Denis Sullivan
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary Martin Thrope
Barbara Goodman

Superintendent: Kathleen Donovan
Chief Financial Officer David Kale
Special Education Director Marilyn Bisbicos
Student Representative: Sean Garballey

Absent: Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry

Call to order: 7:30

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman reviewed correspondence.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously
Voted to approve the Regular meeting minutes of June 11, 2002

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Suzanne it was unanimously
Voted to approve the Executive session minutes of June 11, 2002

Mr. McKenna welcomed AHS student Sean Garballey as the student representative sitting in at the School Committee Meeting.

APPROVAL OF GRADE FOUR AT LESLEY-ELLIS

Deanne Benson, Director, and Theodore Wilson, Executive Director of Lesley-Ellis school gave a presentation to the School Committee requesting expansion to grade four at the school. The school currently serves 72 students, 25 of which are from Arlington. The tuition is \$11,616.00 and runs Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 3:00 pm for 172 days. Supt. Donovan explained that state law requires private schools to seek approval from their local school board. Dr. Gurry did visit the school and recommends approval.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously
Voted to approve the expansion to include grade four at the Lesley-Ellis School.

APPROVAL OF SCIENCE CAMP

Supt. Donovan informed the Committee that the dates for the 5th grade science camp begin October 15th and run to November 15th. The cost of the camp is \$215.00 for the week with 85-90% of the students attending. In response to questions from Committee Members, Mrs. Donovan pointed out that students not attending do so for a variety of reasons, but not due to financial need. The PTO sponsors any student who is in need of assistance.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve the 5th grade curriculum and Environmental Education Program.

MCAS RESULTS

Supt. Donovan stated that Arlington placed 40th overall in the Commonwealth. The schools have done very well, with Brackett School placing number one Statewide in Math and English and the Hardy School placing number 2 in Math and number 8 in English. Mrs. Donovan reviewed the results system-wide at each grade level and the three-year rankings.

The Supt. requested that the committee refer the MCAS results to the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Subcommittee for review. Supt. Donovan would like to invite the directors and department heads from the various disciplines to speak about the MCAS, the type of work being done, and the type of analysis used in their assessments.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously Voted to refer the results of the MCAS to the Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Subcommittee.

PTBC UPDATE

Ms. Owayda reported that the committee had received 15 proposals for the design of the Stratton and Thompson Schools. A subcommittee will review the proposals and recommended five to the full committee for their consideration.

The Peirce School is scheduled for completion late October. Suzanne reminded fellow members that a tour of the Peirce School needs to be scheduled sometime in October.

The Committee decided to tour the Peirce School before the next regular school committee meeting; October 8th at 6:30PM followed by the regular meeting at 7:45 PM.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously Voted to begin the regular school committee meeting of October 8th at 7:45 PM.

INFRASTRUCTURE MEETING REPORT

Supt. Donovan reported on the Infrastructure Working Group that met on September 19th and discussed the following:

- .. Peirce School Update – scheduled for completion late October/early November
- .. Review of SBAB Reimbursement Schedule
- .. Review of Projected Capital Budget – Exempt debt
- .. Dallin School Update
 - Complete Design Phase,
 - Options for construction and SBAB Reimbursement
- .. Thompson/Stratton Update
- .. Implications of a Possible Override in May 2003.

The Committee voiced concern relative to delays (as much as four years) in the start of construction at the Thompson/Stratton Schools after the completion of the Dallin School. Members stressed their obligation to advocate for students; that maintenance of those schools during the interim and cost uncertainties must be a priority as well as securing funds from the Capital Planning Committee for their upkeep.

Mrs. Donovan stated that she along with John Maher and John Bilafer will request to meet with the Dept. of Revenue to discuss the financing of the Peirce School and the Dallin School.

BUDGET UPDATE

CFO David Kale reported that the budget revenue task force continues to meet regularly. He presented a revised 3-year projection draft using the August 2002 Cherry Sheet. Mr. Kale explained that the Governor may be looking at an additional deficit of \$200 million that would further impact local aid. Total revenues of FY03 & FY04 are almost the same, at \$91 million. Projected lost revenues in local aid, decreases in local receipts, and the decrease in the Town's free cash, in addition to rising health insurance and pension costs means the Town would be facing a \$7,665,546.00 deficit. The FY04 deficit is currently projected at \$10,692,209.00. Mr. Kale did emphasize that as we go through the budget process some of the expenditure estimates will be revised.

Break

APPROVAL OF PROCEDURES FOR WARRANT APPROVALS

Ms. LaMachia stated that at the last meeting the procedure for approving warrants was distributed for review and approval to the Committee.

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was Moved approval of the Procedures for Warrant Approvals.

Mr. Thrope addressed the issue requesting, that in the interest of reaching a consensus, that the motion be broken into two separate issues. He stated that he was not comfortable with the budget transfer process stating that detail in transfers is inadequate. Mr. Thrope stressed the importance of institutionalizing good practice and believes that this proposal does not meet the criteria stated by our association (MASC) and strongly suggests we clarify the proposal/process with our association.

Mr. Thrope made the motion that the budget transfer and reporting proposal be referred back to the budget subcommittee for further discussion- no second on the motion.

Mr. McKenna pointed out that further discussion could still take place at a future subcommittee meeting.

Mr. Sullivan believed that the vote of the procedures was a formality and serious concerns should have been addressed or brought to the attention of the chair.

Ms. LaMachia noted that this was a first attempt as a subcommittee to define the budget procedures process and would address concerns at the next budget subcommittee meeting. Ms. Owayda recommended moving forward with the process with the understanding that the committee could make adjustments as needed.

Ms. Goodman agreed that improvements could be made if necessary. Mr. Schlichtman emphasized that it is important to adopt the procedure to fulfill our fiscal responsibility.

Mr. McKenna pointed out that it is incumbent upon us that if we pass the procedure all members must participate; four members must sign off on the warrants.

Mr. Thrope stated that he would vote no on the motion exclusively because the budget transfer process is inadequate, not consistent with our authority and responsibility; there has been enough erosion of school committee authority and he cannot support the process.

Vote on the motion:

Voted approval of the Procedures for Warrant Approvals as recommended by the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer effective October 1, 2002 through June 2003. 6-1 motion passes. Mr. Thrope cited the above reasons for his no vote.

GOALS UPDATE

Joani LaMachia presented the **District Goals Document** to the School Committee for approval.

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously

Voted to receive the **Arlington Public Schools District Goals Document** presented and to thank Christine Simmons and Jerry Carmody for their work on the document.

Mr. Thrope noted that we also need as part of our evaluation process the one-year performance goals of the superintendent. Mrs. Donovan pointed out that as superintendent she has submitted goals every year up until the start of this new process. Since the Superintendent's goals must be based on the system-wide goals, now that that document is complete she will submit them to the Committee.

Supt. has done what was requested

DISCUSSION ON REDISTRICTING AND TRANSITION PLAN

Supt. Donovan recommended that the redistricting plan be referred to the budget subcommittee for review. Mrs. Donovan pointed out that the timing of the construction of Dallin School has a major impact on redistricting since there may be a need to use up to four schools to house Dallin students. The Committee discussed partial redistricting, relocating families and programs more than once, inequity issues, busing costs and impact of the start date of the Dallin School.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously

Voted to refer the redistricting and transition plan to the budget subcommittee for a full discussion and to report back to the full committee after a start date for the Dallin School is finalized.

VOTE POLICIES JRA & JCA

On a motion by Suzanne Owayda and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously

Voted to approve the recommended changes in policy JRA.

On a motion by Suzanne Owayda and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously

Voted to approve the recommended changes in policy JCA.

NEW BUSINESS

.. **MASC Conference Supt.** Donovan stated that the MASC Conference is scheduled for October 30th –November 1st

.. Mr. Thrope requested that a discussion on lead teachers vs. dept. heads be placed on the next agenda. Mr.

Schlichtman suggested the curriculum and instruction subcommittee would be an appropriate place to begin discussion on the issue.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously
Voted to refer the discussion of lead teacher vs. dept heads to the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Mr. Thrope voiced objection over not tape recording executive sessions stating that it was a change from past practice.

Mr.. McKenna stated that the Committee votes on the written minutes not on the tape, that there have been many times that neither a recording secretary nor a tape recorder has been present. Ms. Donovan reported that the Committees' counsel advised that executive session not be recorded and the minutes of the session should reflect only the votes taken.

Ms. Goodman requested that Mr. Miller write a letter advising the Committee on tape recording executive sessions.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations and a legal issue.

With no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: 6-1 (Mr. Thrope voted no)

EXECUTIVE SESSION 10:30 – 10:50 PM

On a motion made and seconded it was unanimously to adjourn at 10:50 PM.

Submitted by,
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary